

Leighton Buzzard
Urban District Council.



ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
Medical Officer of Health
FOR THE YEAR
1919,
BY
PERCY STEDMAN,
M.B. (LOND.), D.P.H. (LOND.),

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TO THE

Leighton Buzzard

Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure to present my Annual Report for 1919. As you are aware, copies of it have to be sent to the Ministry of Health.

The population of the district is estimated by the Registrar General is 6,924.

BIRTH RATE.

The births for the year are 147, giving a birth rate of 20.3 per 1,000. 6 births were illegitimate. The birth rate for England and Wales during 1919 was 18.5 per 1,000.

DEATH RATE.

74 deaths were registered during the year, 12 of which were non-residents and 5 residents died out of the district. The death rate of those belonging to the district was 9.6 per 1,000, the death rate for England and Wales during 1919 being 13.8 per 1,000.

There have been 8 deaths of children under one year. The infant mortality (rate per 1,000 births) was 54.4.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

During the year there were 6 cases of diphtheria and 4 of scarlet fever. 4 cases of malaria were notified of men who had been in Army. There was one case of poliomyelitis and there were numerous cases of measles and chicken pox.

DIPHTHERIA.

On May 6th a girl aged 8 was notified as suffering from diphtheria. The house was just on the boundary of the district, there were no other children in the house and there was ample room for isolation. The child was a very delicate one and the parents wished her to be kept at home. It was a severe case, and convalescence was very protracted. The child made a good recovery. The cause of this disease was not traced and no further cases arose.

On Sept. 8th a child aged 7 was notified from Rushmere Cottages. It was a very severe case from the commencement and was sent to the Isolation Hospital, but it did not recover. From the particulars ascertained there is no doubt that it contracted the disease from Heath. On October 20th a child aged 4 was notified from Water Lane. The case was sent to hospital, making a good recovery. The parents could not account for the cause of the disease, neither was there anything about the cottage to account for it. On October 31st a boy aged 8 was notified from Church St. There were no other children in the house and it occurred in one of the best of the medium sized houses in the town. There was ample isolation and the parents wished to have the case treated at home. There was no objection to this course being taken and the boy made a good recovery.

On November 8th two further cases occurred at Rushmere, one a boy aged 5, which was a very severe case and too ill to be removed. He did not recover. The other case, a boy aged 9, which was also a very severe case, there was not room for isolation and it was necessary to remove it to the hospital. This case did not recover.

Together with the Sanitary Inspector I made several visits to these isolated cottages. We found no abnormal sanitation. The owner of the cottages was so anxious to have something done in view of the outbreaks that he discontinued the use of the existing pail closets and had new ones built some distance away from the houses. The drainage was thoroughly overhauled. There is no doubt that the cases were contracted from Heath. We went into the question of the milk supply which was from a pure source.

SCARLET FEVER.

On July 10th a boy aged 10 was notified as suffering from scarlet fever and removed to hospital, making a good recovery. From inquiries made it was found impossible to ascertain the cause of the disease.

On November 27th, two girls aged 9 and 6 were notified from a house in the Vandyke Road. There was ample isolation in the house and it was the wish of the parents that they should remain at home and there was no objection to this course being taken. They made good recoveries.

On December 12th a girl aged 8 was notified from George St. The parents were desirous that this case should be treated at home and as there was plenty of isolation we allowed them to adopt this course. The case made a good recovery.

ENTERIC FEVER.

It should be remarked that during the whole year there has been no case of enteric fever which points to the healthy state of the town and the effective sanitation.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Fifteen cases of tuberculosis were notified during the year. Some of these had been previously notified. All the cases are visited and instructions are given to them as to the disposal of sputum and the occupation of separate bedrooms.

It is often found that on making enquiries there is a history of consumption in some of the patients' relatives.

POLIOMYELITIS.

On October 12th a woman aged 22 was notified as suffering from poliomyelitis. They were well-to-do people and lived in a good detached house. They had a specialist from London at the commencement of the illness, who diagnosed the disease from the clinical symptoms.

The anterior tibia muscles of the left leg were paralysed, causing dropped foot, and the left arm was slightly paralysed, the reflexes were nearly gone, there were gastro intestinal symptoms, there was sickness and constipation. There had

been no illness among the other inmates of the house of transitory paralysis, muscular weakness, or gastro intestinal disturbance, neither had there been any illness with any other persons with whom the patient had been in contact. All discharges from the patient and all articles soiled by such discharges were immediately disinfected. Lumbar puncture was not undertaken. There was no overcrowding of the house, there being five bedrooms, the only other occupants being the father and mother. The house and patient were in a very clean condition. The patient does not remember having been bitten by an insect and the father and mother had not been away from home. There was no infestation by rats. The necessary steps were taken to prevent deformity, massage was performed and electrical treatment was persisted in.

ERYSIPELAS.

Only one case of erysipelas occurred during the year.

INFLUENZA.

The cases that occurred during the early part of the year were of a very mild character and not in any way comparable to the epidemic of the previous year.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

There were four cases treated in the hospital during the year, three diphtheria and one scarlet fever.

MILK SUPPLY.

The milk supply is obtained from the Urban District and from the Eaton Bray Rural District. Inspections of the suppliers premises and the cowsheds have been made. The milk supply is of good quality. Considering the shortage that has been over the country this district has been well supplied.

SEWAGE.

The sludge has been frequently removed by a contractor and no complaints of smell have been received during the year. Two of the filters were taken down and the clinker burned to help filtration. The crop of osiers realised the record price of £187. Disinfectants are supplied to dustbins.

DISINFECTION.

A stock of disinfectants is kept at the Council Offices and also at Back Lane and the public can have a full supply on application, which they take advantage of. Disinfectants are put in the watering carts during the summer months. Premises are always disinfected after cases of infectious disease, and when cases have died of tuberculosis. There are two common lodging houses, which are kept in clean and wholesome condition.

There are ten slaughter houses in the district. They are all well kept and lime washed frequently.

There are twelve bakehouses. They are all clean and well kept.

There is only one offensive trade in this district, being a knacker's yard which is quite away from the town and is frequently visited by the Sanitary Inspector. It is paved, and general conditions are good.

HOUSING SCHEME.

In October last, the Sanitary Inspector and I commenced a house to house inspection for the purpose of ascertaining the particulars required for completing the Form of Survey of housing needs under the Housing Town Planning Act, 1919.

On the subject of housing accommodation we found that the following conditions existed:

Number of houses in district	1,805
Number of working class houses	1,186
Average number of working class houses built annually during the five years before the war	8.4
Number of working class houses built between January 1st, 1915, and December 31st, 1918,	4

With regard to overcrowding the following particulars were ascertained:—

Houses with more than two occupants per room	45
Total number of occupants in above houses...	347
Number of houses intended for one family only, which were then occupied by two or more families	47

The prevailing condition as to insanitary houses were as follows :—

Number of houses which were not and could not be made fit for human habitation	10
Number of persons inhabiting these houses	37
Houses subject to closing orders	10
Houses seriously defective, but which could be made habitable	45

The scheme for the provision of new houses under Section 1 of the Housing Town Planning, etc., Act, 1919, provided for 12 houses to be built in Stanbridge Road. Negotiations were opened with the owner of the land for the purchase of the same.

The Stanbridge Road site has since been abandoned.

A site has now been selected in Clarence Road to erect eight houses as a first instalment. Prices for the site have been arranged with the three owners and plans have been approved.

Another site which has had the consideration of the Council is one situate in America Row, St. Andrew's St. This site has been submitted to the Housing Commissioner for approval, but sanction has been refused on the ground of the site not being cleared of existing old cottages and also on the ground of the neighbourhood not being sufficiently suitable to ensure an economic rent for the houses being obtained.

The Council have now decided to consider the question of the demolition of the old cottages referred to, and notices to the owners have been served as required by section 49 of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890.

It is generally agreed that the America Row site is a suitable one for housing purposes. The sewer and water are both laid on in the road, and provided the approval of the Housing Commissioner can be obtained when the existing old cottages are removed, a further instalment of four houses will be immediately erected.

UN SOUND FOOD.

On the 12th September, 128 lbs. of American bacon, which was consigned to a local firm of grocers, was condemned as unfit for human consumption. On two occasions

the premises of a local fish merchant have been visited and a quantity of unsound fish has been condemned.

Together with the Executive Officer of the Food Control the premises of several local grocers were visited and consignments of dates condemned. On May 27th the sanitary inspector and I visited the market and found a crate of fish totally unfit for food. The fish was not being offered for sale nor was there any evidence that it was so intended. We made another visit on the 3rd of June and found a further quantity of unsound fish. In this case a total of 11 crates were dealt with, most of the fish was unfit for food, but in the circumstances the stall holder agreed to surrender the 11 crates. The fish was taken away and buried.

Complaints were made from two sources in respect of pigs being kept in close proximity to occupied premises. In both cases the pigs referred to were outside the limit prescribed by the Council's bye-laws, also in both cases the pig styes were found to be in a cleanly condition, with brick and cement floor. It was quite obvious the complaints referred to were groundless.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT, 1919.

1. GENERAL.

Number of inspections	72
Complaints received	23
Nuisances detected without complaint	14
Notices served, 72; informal, 49; formal	23
Nuisances abated (a) by persons responsible	70
(b) by Council	2
Summonses taken out	Nil
Convictions	Nil

2. HOUSE NUISANCES.

Roofs repaired	4
Spouts cleaned and repaired	4
Pavements repaired	Nil
Overcrowding abated	Nil
Dirty houses cleansed	0
Other defects remedied	5

3. DRAINS, W.C.'s, PRIVIES, Etc.

Total defects found	17
Drains cleaned, repaired, or ventilated	0
New drains laid	0
W.C.'s constructed	0
W.C.'s repaired	5
W.C.'s supplied with water (formerly without)	0
Privies repaired	1

4. WATER SUPPLY.

Houses supplied with water during year (formerly without)	0
Samples taken for analysis, good 5, bad	5
Certificates granted (Rural Districts only)	0
Certificates deferred (Rural Districts only)	0
Cisterns cleansed, repaired, etc.	0
Wells cleansed or repaired	0
Wells closed	1

5. FOOD.

Seizure of unsound food, 0; details separately	0
Surrender of unsound food 3; details separately	3

6. SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

Number on register	10
Number of inspections	40
Number of defects found	4
Number remedied	4

7. BAKEHOUSES.

Number on register	12
Number of inspections	12
Number of defects found	0
Number remedied	0

8. DAIRIES, COWSHEDS AND MILKSHOPS.

Number of Dairymen or Purveyors of Milk on Register	2
Number of Cowkeepers on Register	1
Number of Inspections	4
Number of defects found	0
Number remedied	0

9. FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

Number on register	0
Number of inspections	0
Number of defects found	0
Number remedied	0

10. VARIOUS.

Removal of animals improperly kept	0
Visits to infected houses	9
Houses disinfected	9
Other items (e.g. Common Lodging Houses Canal Boats, etc.), two Common Lodging Houses, inspections	4

Your obedient servant,

PERCY STEDMAN.

Medical Officer of Health.

TABLE I.

Vital Statistics of whole District during 1919 & previous years.

Year.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.			Total Deaths Registered in the District.		TRANSFERABLE DEATHS.		Nett Deaths belonging to the District.			
		Uncor. No.	Nett.		Number.	Rate.	of Non- residents registered in the District.	of Resi- dents not registered in the District.	Under One Year of Age		At all Ages.	
			Number.	Rate.					Number.	Rate per 1,000 Nett Births.	Number.	Rate.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1914	6850	130	129	18.8	108	15.7	13	17	6	46	112	16.3
1915	6451	131	131	20.3	158	24.5	21	14	16	122	151	23.4
1916	6197	151	151	22.3	113	18.2	15	6	6	39	104	16.7
1917	6574	101	104	14.1	109	16.5	17	9	10	96	101	15.3
1918	7369	117	117	15.8	118	17.9	14	9	6	51	113	17.1
1919	6924	145	147	20.3	74	10.6	12	5	8	54.4	67	9.6

Area of District in acres
(land and inland
water) } 2,426.

Total population at all ages 6784
Total families or separate occupiers 1657 } At Census,
1911.

TABLE II.

Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the year 1919.

Notifiable Disease	Number of Cases Notified.							Total cases removed to Hospital.
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.						
		1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 45	45 to 65	65 & upwards	
Small-pox								
Cholera								
Diphtheria (including Membranous Croup)	6	2	4	...	...	...	...	3
Erysipelas	I	...	...	...	...	I	...	...
Scarlet Fever	4	...	4	..	...	...	...	I
Typhus Fever ...								
Enteric Fever.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Relapsing Fever ...								
Continued Fever ...								
Puerperal Fever ...								
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis.....								
Poliomyelitis	I	...	...	I	...	...	...	...
Measles and German Measles .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	I4	...	2	5	6	I	...	...
Other forms of Tuberculosis.....	I	...	...	...	I	...	...	...
Malaria	4	...	...	...	4	...	...	...
Totals	3I	2	IO	6	II	2	...	4

Isolation Hospital at Leighton Buzzard, provided by the Urban District Council.
Cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis usually sent to Great Baddon Sanatorium,
Chelmsford.

TABLE III.

LEIGHTON BUZZARD URBAN DISTRICT.—Causes of, and Ages at Death during the year 1919.

Causes of Death.		Nett Deaths at the subjoined ages of "Residents " whether occurring in or beyond the District								
		All Ages.	Under 1 Year.	1 and under 2.	2 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 45.	45 and under 65.	65 and upward.
All Causes	{ Certified Uncert.	67	8		2	2	3	3	12	37
Enteric Fever										
Small-pox										
Measles										
Scarlet Fever										
Whooping Cough										
Diphtheria and Croup ...		3			1	2				
Influenza		2						1	1	
Erysipelas										
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis) ..		2					1	1		
Tuberculous Meningitis										
Other Tuberculous Diseases		1								1
Cancer, malignant Disease		4							1	3
Rheumatic Fever										
Meningitis		1	1							
Organic Heart Disease...		3							1	2
Bronchitis		2								2
Pneumonia (all forms) ...		1					1			
Other Diseases of Respiratory Organs										
Diarrhoea and Enteritis										
Appendicitis & Typhlitis										
Cirrhosis of Liver										
Alcoholism										
Nephritis and Bright's Disease		3					1	1	1	
Puerperal Fever...										
Other Accidents and Diseases of Pregnancy and Parturition ...										
Congenital Debility and Malformation, including Premature Birth		3	3							
ViolentDeaths,excluding Suicide		1								1
Suicide										
Other Defined Diseases		40	4		1				8	27
Diseases ill-defined or unknown		1								1
Accidents...										
Totals		67	8		2	2	3	3	12	37

Leighton Buzzard Urban District.—Infantile Mortality during the year 1919.
 Nett Deaths from stated Causes at various ages under One Year of Age.

CAUSE OF DEATH.	Under 1 week.	1—2 weeks.	2—3 weeks.	Total under 1 month.	1—3 months.	3—6 months.	6—9 months.	9—12 months	Total Deaths under One Year.
All Causes { Certified Uncertified	3		I	4	I	I		2	8
Small-pox									
Chicken-pox									
Measles									
Scarlet Fever									
Whooping Cough									
Diphtheria : Croup									
Erysipelas									
{ Tuberculous Meningitis Abdominal Tuberculosis Other Tuberculous Diseases									
Meningitis (<i>not Tuberculous</i>)								I	I
Convulsions	I			I		I		I	3
Laryngitis... ..									
Bronchitis									
Pneumonia (all forms)									
{ Diarrhœa									
{ Enteritis									
Gastritis									
Syphilis					I				I
Rickets									
Suffocation, overlying									
Injury at Birth									
Atelectasis									
{ Congenital Malformations Premature Birth	I		I	2					2
{ Atrophy. Debility, and Marasmus									
Violence									
Other Causes	I			I					I
Totals	3		I	4	I	I		2	8

Nett Births in the Year—Legitimate 147. Illegitimate 6.
 Nett deaths in the Year—Legitimate Infants, 8. Illegitimate Infants, 0.

